

powerhouse CNet hired Mullenweg to work on it and other projects. Mullenweg quit in 2005, however, to work full-time on WordPress, which today is more like a content-management system, with various templates, widgets, and plug-ins, and Askismet antispam protection (we reviewed the service in January 2007.)

17. Philip RosedaleCEO, Linden Lab

Philip Rosedale took the MMORPG (massively multiplayer online role-playing game) concept and spun it into the Web's most talked-about virtual destination: Second Life. But don't call it just a game. For more and more "residents," Second Life has become a first life, where they can do everything in the virtual world from getting married to launching businesses that function exclusively within the site's confines. Many real-world businesses have opened Second Life branches, too. In fact, Second Life has become so popular that the inevitable backlash has begun: Nick Denton's Valleywag (see #45) has compared the game's economy to a pyramid scheme

18. Jon Lech JohansenCreator, DeCSS decryption program

Better known as DVD-Jon, Jon Lech Johansen is the Norwegian hacker who broke the encryption system used on DVD movies, thereby allowing them to be copied. He released the DeCSS decryption program in 2002 and was promptly prosecuted in his homeland. Eventually acquitted, Johansen went on to crack Apple's iTunes DRM (repeatedly) while working as a software developer in the United States. Beaten to the punch in cracking high-definition DVD formats by the still-anonymous muslix64, who created "backup" programs for HD DVD late last year and for Blu-ray Disc in January, Johansen nonetheless remains the renegade that big media fears most.

19. Jerry Yang, David Filo, and Terry SemelExecutives, Yahoo

Google's product innovations and its blockbuster purchase of YouTube for \$1.65 billion may have pushed Yahoo out of the limelight, but the Web giant led by founders Yang and Filo and CEO Terry Semel are fighting back. In the past two years, Yahoo has acquired online photo-sharing site Flickr and social bookmarking site Del.icio.us. It also continues to launch new properties such as Yahoo Food and Yahoo Pipes (for creating custom data feeds). Yahoo's recent switch to the Panama advertising platform represents another attempt to recapture ad revenue from Google. (*Full disclosure: The author of this story writes a blog hosted at tech.yahoo.com.*)

20. Jack MaCOO, Alibaba.com

Want to do business in China without springing for a plane ticket to Shanghai? Alibaba.com is your best bet. Founded by Jack Ma in 1999, this massively successful business-to-business e-marketplace is the best place online to meet people and trade proposals and product offers. (Ma has been quoted as saying that the firm got its bizarre start when he was kidnapped in Malibu and released on the condition he help his captor start a business in China.) In 2005, Yahoo (see #19) made a multibillion-dollar investment in Alibaba, which now runs Yahoo China. The venture recently became mired in scandal, when it provided information that led to the imprisonment of a Chinese journalist accused of leaking state secrets.

IMPORTANT PEOPLE #21 THROUGH #25

21. Brewster KahleDirector, Internet Archive

Since 1996, the nonprofit Internet Archive has been collecting terabytes of data—old books, movies, music, and radio shows. Meanwhile, another feature, called the Wayback Machine, has been quietly taking snapshots of Web history to memorialize where we browsed. Take a look at the Internet Archive's old snapshots of your favorite Web sites and you may be shocked at how different they used to be. Kahle cofounded the Internet Archive with the goal of "preserving our digital heritage," but don't let the humble curatorial pose fool you: Kahle has also challenged changes to U.S. copyright law in Kahle vs. Gonzales, a high-profile First Amendment legal case.

22. Ray OzzieChief software architect, Microsoft

In 2006, when Bill Gates abdicated the position of chief software architect at Microsoft

after 30 hands-on years, observers applauded his choice of successor: software visionary Ray Ozzie. The creator of Lotus Notes and Groove collaboration software is now charged with ensuring Microsoft's technological relevance in an age in which the Web threatens to replace the traditional desktop OS. A pioneer in computer-based collaboration, Ozzie seems well equipped to do the job. One piece of unsolicited advice, Ray: You might consider updating your blog as a first step.

23. Markos Moulitsas ZunigaBlogger, Daily Kos

The left's most high-profile voice on the Web, Markos "Kos" Moulitsas, is a political powerhouse without equal online. His blog draws comments from liberals ranging from Nancy Pelosi (news, bio, voting record) to Jimmy Carter, and Moulitsas even launched a conference (broadcast in part on C-Span) for like-minded political activists. Kos's endorsements haven't always triumphed, but his backing of Ned Lamont was influential in opponent Joe Lieberman 's loss of the Democratic Senate primary in Connecticut last year, though Lieberman eventually won the general election as an independent. Kos has not indicated any desire to run for office himself as yet.

24. Jeff BezosCEO, Amazon

He may have launched Amazon.com with the goal of developing it into a big online bookstore, but Bezos proved that shlepping books and CDs across the country was just a first act. The next round: adding toys, T-shirts, and power tools. And now, for scene three, Bezos has thrown himself into Web services. What does it mean? Just the start of a new framework for developing Web sites, including "utility computing" services that let you buy server time at a rate of 10 cents an hour. While we wait to find out how his newfangled grid computing strategies pan out, don't forget that Bezos will sell you a Barbie Fashion Fever Grow 'N Style Styling Head for 50 percent off.

25. Robert ScobleVice president of media development, PodTech.net

You know a grassroots movement is a success when big business wants to join in. And for once, big business--namely Microsoft--did it right. This was largely due to Robert Scoble. At the time a Microsoft employee, he blogged about the company and revealed a human--and sometimes egg-covered--side of the Redmond empire. The glimpse into Microsoft's inner workings, cool technologies, and smart people shattered (or at least dented) the Microsoft stereotype. Microsoft blogs have subsequently become an integral part of the company's communication with users. In 2006 Scoble left Microsoft for PodTech.net, where his video podcast Scoble Show features interviews with geeks. Recent guests include *PC World*'s editor in chief Harry McCracken, who stopped in to debate the eternal question: Mac or PC? Scoble has also interviewed 2008 presidential candidate John Edwards, whose outspoken bloggers got him into hot water.

IMPORTANT PEOPLE #26 THROUGH #30

26. John BattelleEntrepreneur and chairman, Federated Media Publishing

Entrepreneur and journalist John Battelle has had a ringside seat for the unfolding of Webs 1.0, 2.0 (he cohosts the Web 2.0 Summit conference with Tim O'Reilly--see #36), and (in its preliminary stages) 3.0. In addition, he founded what some would call the *Vanity Fair* and the *People Magazine* of the Internet era: *Wired Magazine* and *The Industry Standard*. His most recent venture, Federated Media Publishing, represents the A-list of online content. Its slate of more than 50 sites includes 43 Folders, Ars Technica, BoingBoing, and TechCrunch. Battelle's 2005 book *The Search: How Google and Its Rivals Rewrote the Rules of Business and Transformed Our Culture* and his blog Searchblog are required reading for anyone who wants to understand the constantly evolving landscape of the tech industry.

27. Lawrence LessigCEO, Creative Commons

Acknowledging his kinglike status in the field, *Wired* once called him the "Elvis of Cyberlaw"--and the name stuck. Lawrence Lessig is a professor at Stanford University Law School and founder and chair of Creative Commons (CC), a nonprofit initiative that promotes a free but nonrevocable licensing system for online works. Designed to enable copyright holders to share content and yet still control it, a CC license spells out whether

the holder wants to require attribution, restrict commercial use, or allow derivative works under specified circumstances. Musical acts such as DangerMouse and David Byrne have made songs available under the CC's Sampling Plus license for noncommercial sharing and commercial sampling, while restricting advertising uses of it. A wealth of Creative Commons-licensed media is stored in searchable form at the Creative Commons Search page.

28. Meg WhitmanCEO, eBay

If there's an industry that eBay doesn't touch, we haven't found it yet. Whether trying to score a PlayStation 3 on opening week or laboring to complete your set of Thundercats action figures, you have probably visited the venerable king of all auctions. But Meg Whitman, whose tenure as CEO of eBay is now approaching nine years (an era by dot-com standards), has more on her mind than just vintage GI Joe dolls and state quarters. She's also boss of the Web's largest online payment system, PayPal, and proud new owner of the most popular VoIP system, Skype (see #15).

29. Ron Wyden (news, bio, voting record)U.S. Senator, Oregon

Oregon's senior U.S. Senator, a Democrat, has long ranked as one of Capitol Hill most influential voices on technology issues. During his tenure, Wyden has authored or co-authored the Science and Technology Emergency Mobilization Act, the Cyber Security Research and Development Act, and the controversial CAN-SPAM Act. (Hey, they can't all be winners.) More recently, Wyden has introduced a bill called the Internet Nondiscrimination Act, which would prevent telecom companies from charging more for delivering content faster.

30. Michael ArringtonBlogger/publisher, TechCrunch

An entrepreneur and former attorney who cofounded Canada's answer to Netflix (Zip.ca), Michael Arrington turned his attention in 2005 to blogging about Web startups. Almost overnight he became a sensation, eliciting the kind of fawning attention from dot-com wannabes that is normally reserved for the likes of men with surnames like Gates and Jobs. With TechCrunch properties now sprawling across six domains, the often-irascible Arrington is indisputably the most powerful technology blogger working today.

IMPORTANT PEOPLE #31 THROUGH #35

31. Bruce SchneierCryptographer

Whether his focus is the Transportation Security Administration's latest boneheaded security procedures or the question of how secure a 12-character password really is, Bruce Schneier offers the most lucid (and most profoundly influential) musings on computer security you're likely to find online or off. Schneier's recent writings on security problems associated with the war on terrorism--abroad, at home, and online--are required reading.

32. Kevin RoseFounder, Digg

Everyone who has a story on the Web wants Kevin Rose's users to "digg it." The former TechTV host (and colleague of Leo Laporte--see #47) founded Digg.com in 2004, bringing the power of social networking to the news. Digg's algorithm lets users submit their favorite news stories and vote them up (or down). Digg's expansion beyond technology news to mainstream news categories in June 2006 prompted BusinessWeek to slap a goofy-looking picture of Rose on its cover along with an eyebrow-raising valuation estimate of \$60 million. Whether Rose is a multimillionaire or not, his site has plenty of clout on the Internet.

33. David FarberFounder, Interesting-People.org

Since the early 1990s, David Farber has been running the Interesting-People mailing list. It started as a small e-mail list for friends and colleagues (the interesting people) and turned into the mother lode of online mailing lists. Interesting-People takes on topics from 9/11 to the Digital Millennium Copyright Act to Net neutrality and is rife with highly opinionated commentary from some very influential people. Farber is currently a professor of computer science and public policy at Carnegie Mellon University. His past positions include a stint as chief technologist for the Federal Communications Commission.